

VLR-12/16/80 NRHP-7/8/83

United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

For HCRS use only
received
date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Oakland Grove Presbyterian Church

and/or common Same

2. Location

street & number N side of route 696; W of Selma N/A not for publication
city, town Selma X vicinity of congressional district Sixth (M. Caldwell Butler)
state Virginia code 51 county Alleghany code 005

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
	N/A	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Trustees, Oakland Grove Presbyterian Church

street & number N/A

city, town Selma N/A vicinity of state Virginia 24474

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Alleghany County Courthouse

street & number N/A

city, town Covington state Virginia

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

(2) (See Continuation Sheet #1)

(1) Historic American Buildings
title Survey and Inventory has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1959 federal state county local

depository for survey records Library of Congress

city, town Washington state D. C.

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one	
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site	N/A
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved	date _____
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed			

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Oakland Grove Presbyterian Church is situated on a wooded slope defined on the south by State Route 696 and on the north by the Chesapeake and Ohio Railroad with the Jackson River beyond.

The rectangular, 30' x 40', one-story church sits on a foundation of coursed rubble. The walls are constructed of brick: the facade laid in Flemish bond and the remaining walls laid in five-course American bond. A molded brick cornice runs beneath the eaves of the gable roof, which is covered with slate shingles.

The facade (north) retains its original single-paneled double doors framed by a five-light transom. Hung-sash windows with 2/2 lights are found on all elevations. The sashes probably replace earlier ones having smaller panes. The east and west entrances also were bricked up, creating the present two-bay asymmetrical composition. Four double-paired windows are found on the south elevation. A simple rear entrance provides access to an interior gallery.

The interior is a single-space auditorium retaining its original wide-plank chestnut floor. The room contains a center aisle formed by the placement of the original box-type, scroll-arm pews. The gallery, supported by square columns, wraps around three sides of the room and is reached by the rear stair.

The building has never been electrified; kerosene lamps continue to illuminate the church.

MM

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The deed for the church property recorded in 1859 describes the property as, "being the same on which said church now stands on the edge of the Covington and Lexington Turnpike Road." Oakland Church was then also bounded on the north by a spring and called the "Church by the spring." In view of these historic boundaries, the nomination consists of one acre including the church and fenced cemetery, which are still bordered by a stream on the north and State Route 696 to the south.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/ humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

Specific dates Ca. 1847 **Builder/Architect** Unknown

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Oakland Grove Presbyterian Church is the oldest known ecclesiastical structure in Alleghany County and is popularly regarded as one of the county's chief historic landmarks. Architecturally, the well-crafted but simple building is a representative example of a small, mid-19th-century country church surviving with few alterations. Built ca. 1847, the church is also a reminder of the religious reawakening that occurred in the 1840s among Scotch-Irish Presbyterian settlers in the mountainous region of the state. The building originally was erected as a mission of the Covington Presbyterian Church and served as a Confederate hospital during the Civil War.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Oakland Grove may have been organized as early as 1834 but, according to local historians, its official identity dates from 1847 when it began service as a mission of Covington Presbyterian Church. The construction of the church building in that year coincided with a religious reawakening among Presbyterians in the region. According to the leading historian of Presbyterians in the South, six churches in the Montgomery Presbytery enjoyed in this period "a few seasons of refreshing."¹ The revival was not comparable to those of earlier years, but it indicated renewed interest in religion in the area.

Although the majority of settlers in Alleghany County were of Scotch-Irish descent, establishing permanent Presbyterian congregations proved difficult in this remote, mountainous region. A formal organization took place in 1819, the year in which Covington was incorporated as a town. The earliest gravestone at Oakland Church also dates from that year, but it is unlikely that a church building stood on the site at that time. The land then was owned by the family of William Haynes, who later deeded a small part of their property to the trustees of the Oakland Grove Church. The deed, recorded in 1859, specifically refers to that land being the same "on which the said church now stands..."²

Originally, the church edifice faced the main road that ran from Clifton Forge to Covington. However, with changes in both the railroad and the highways, the building now faces the railroad and is reached only by a stairway below the present highway, now located to the rear. Prior to the Civil War, the western line of the Virginia Central Railroad, now the Chesapeake and Ohio, terminated near the Oakland Grove Church. Travelers had to disembark there and continue their trips to such famous spas as White Sulphur and Hot Springs by way of horseback or stagecoach.

Because of its convenient location on a river, a railroad, and a major east-west turnpike, Oakland Grove Church served as a Confederate hospital during the Civil War. A number of soldiers were buried in its cemetery, including twelve members of a Tennessee Regiment who served under Stonewall Jackson. The church's tiny graveyard became so crowded that additional burial space had to be found on the neighboring Haynes plantation.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Alleghany County Deed Book 6, p. 24 (1859).

Morton, Oren. A Centennial History of Alleghany County, Virginia. Dayton, VA.: J. K. Ruebush Co., 1923.

Richmond, VA., Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission Archives.

Thompson, Ernest Trice. Presbyterians in the South (Volume One, 1607-1861). Richmond: John Knox Press, 1963.

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property 1 acre

Quadrangle name Clifton Forge, Va.

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UMT References

A

1	7	6	0	0	3	3	0	4	1	8	4	2	3	0
Zone			Easting					Northing						

B

Zone			Easting					Northing						

C

Zone			Easting					Northing						

D

Zone			Easting					Northing						

E

Zone			Easting					Northing						

F

Zone			Easting					Northing						

G

Zone			Easting					Northing						

H

Zone			Easting					Northing						

Verbal boundary description and justification Beginning at a point 600' S of U.S. Route 220, approximately 1 mi. SW of Clifton Forge city limits; thence extending 175' S to N side of State Route 696; thence extending 150' W on said side of said route; thence extending 200' NNW; thence extending 200' E to point of origin.(See # 7 for boundary justification)

state N/A code county N/A code

state N/A code county N/A code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission Staff

organization Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission date December 1980

street & number 221 Governor Street telephone (804) 786-3144

city or town Richmond state Virginia 23219

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature H. Bryan Mitchell 6/3/82

title H. Bryan Mitchell, Executive Director date DEC 16 1980
Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission

For HCRS use only
I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register
date

Keeper of the National Register
date

Attest:
date

Chief of Registration

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

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Oakland Grove Presbyterian Church, Alleghany County, Virginia
Continuation sheet #1 Item number 6,8

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6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

- (2) Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission Survey
1979 State
Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission
221 Governor Street
Richmond, Virginia 23219

8. SIGNIFICANCE

In 1871 Oakland Grove Church became an independent congregation in the Montgomery Presbytery. From it grew Presbyterian churches at Low Moor, Clifton Forge, and Rich Patch in Alleghany County. Oakland Grove continues to hold special services for its members.

MTP/MM

¹Ernest T. Thompson, Presbyterians in the South. (Volume One, 1607-1861) (Richmond, 1963), p. 466.

²Alleghany County Deed Book 6, p. 24 (1859).

